

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

October 18, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary of Homeland Security
United States Department on Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

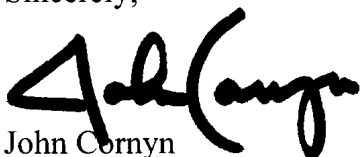
The media report about a foreign national with a highly contagious form of tuberculosis being permitted to transit in and out of the United States on numerous occasions is very disturbing. More concerning is that the Department of Homeland Security did not immediately notify all relevant ports of entry and agencies so that inspectors could apprehend the individual prior to entry or travel through the United States. The report indicates that it took the Department six weeks to post an electronic "lookout" that would alert all inspectors of the potential health risk and threat to public safety posed by this individual. I urge the department to fully investigate this matter and provide me a briefing as soon as possible.

DHS must immediately respond to any potential public safety and health threat posed by individuals and effectively communicate those threats to all staff. This failure in communication and lack of responsiveness causes great concern about your Department's ability to effectively address our border and interior security and to ensure that no person, whether a threat to public health or safety or a national security threat, has the ability to enter our country when DHS becomes aware of such a threat. This incident also highlights current loopholes that may potentially be exploited by those who seek to do harm to our country.

I urge you to look into this matter expeditiously, provide a written response, particularly from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and take any steps necessary to address these failures, ensuring this does not happen in the future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Cornyn", written in a cursive style.

John Cornyn
UNITED STATES SENATOR